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ABSTRACT

A study was done of higher education curricula with substantial enrollment by women (such as fashion merchandising and home economics) to examine the context and substance of the curricula, to identify infrastructures that have supported these programs, and to probe issues that face administrators, faculty and students engaged in such programs. The study involved a cross disciplinary team of scholars who are addressing issues surrounding these areas, a literature review and personal interviews. In addition, a strategically selected sample of highly positioned collegiate programs were audited to identify course requirements for bachelors' degrees emphasizing fashion merchandising. Findings validated an interdependent set of cross disciplinary courses that were central to the specialized emphasis, including economics and marketing. Consumer science was the most frequently designated integrative subject area. The most popular elective concentrations in conjunction with fashion merchandising were marketing, advertising, management, and other subjects offered in business administration. A myriad of incorporated department and division titles were found to be associated with fashion merchandising. In addition, given the numbers of students served and ascribed program qualities, faculty and administrative resources were considered relatively cost effective. (60 references) (JB)

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Female Intense Curricula: Fashion Merchandising in Home Economics and Associated Programs in Higher Education

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Preface

This research report and position paper involved and was reviewed by a cross-disciplinary team of scholars. An exhaustive literature search and personal interview schedule preceded and were confluent with the study. Consultation with various individuals from major disciplines associated with fashion merchandising programs, in particular economics, marketing, and liberal studies, was part of the research strategy.

The principal investigator and writer was Dr. Kathleen Mikitka. The first author's more than two decades of experience in Consumer Science, Economic Education, and Higher Education Administration was fundamental to this examination of "fashion merchandising" as a collegiate program area. Mary Lou Van Camp's participation in this project spans five years of commitment to accuracy and detail in the data collection and processing. Among the reviewers was Dr. Ronald Stampfl, Professor of Marketing, College of Business Administration. Professor Stampfl has had nearly twenty-five years of experience attempting to bridge consumer science and retailing in academia. He offered some provocative ideas during discussions of the study and editing of the manuscript. Two anonymous reviewers provided additional perspectives.

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Abstract

The status of programs in higher education with substantial cohorts of women is of interest to administrators, faculty, and students. Trends in higher education have heightened the urgency to confront and evaluate the substance of widely offered curricula including fashion merchandising, home economics, and their associated programs. The purpose of this research was threefold: (1) to examine the context and substance of curricula that have emphasized specializations in fashion merchandising, (2) to identify infrastructures that have supported these programs, and (3) to probe issues that face administrators, faculty, and students engaged in such programs. The study involved a cross disciplinary team of scholars who are addressing issues surrounding these areas. An exhaustive literature review and personal interview schedule underpinned the research.

A strategically selected sample of highly positioned collegiate programs were audited to identify course requirements for bachelors' degrees emphasizing fashion merchandising. A curricular profile was constructed based on the analysis and classification of over 1,200 semester course units reported by respondents. Tabular notes highlighted key words and hybrid rhetoric that are encompassed in the curricula. Intradepartmental specialized courses, including fashion product knowledge, fashion business process, professional field and work experiences, were supported by general education and business administration courses. Findings validated an interdependent set of cross disciplinary courses that were central to the specialized emphasis, including economics and marketing. Consumer science was the most frequently designated integrative subject area, yet there was

much diversity in election of integrative courses. The most popular elective concentrations in conjunction with fashion merchandising were marketing, then advertising, management, and other subjects offered in business administration.

A myriad of incorporated department and division titles and corresponding, yet not necessarily consistent or relevant, degree titles and specializations were associated with fashion merchandising at the institutions studied. Fashion merchandising programs were distinguished by a business management focus with various emphases on consumer, design, and product. Merchandising faculty research in progress supported instructional program areas with business, consumer, and product (apparel and textiles) oriented topics. Representatives from soft goods industries and the apparel marketing business community served as external program advisors. Given the numbers of students served and ascribed program qualities and features, faculty and administrative resources generally were considered relatively cost effective at the institutions studied.

Implications of the study were discussed with reference to nomenclature, teaching and scholarship, and interprofessional relations. Recommendations dealt with facilitating uniformity of expression, integrative program components, and collaboration. The findings confirmed, in part, a theory of curricular history that supposes the decline of home economics as a program area in higher education.

Introduction

Currently, far-reaching restructuring in higher education is occurring at institutions as diverse as Yale University (Report of the Committee on Restructuring the Faculty of Arts and Science, 1992), the University of Maryland (Paoletti, 1992), the University of Houston (Griggs & Stewart, 1991), and a growing number of others. Higher education is engaged in an unprecedented budgetary and curricular reform movement (Association of American Colleges [AAC], 1985). Institutions of all types across the United States are reconfiguring in response to calls for improvement in teaching and relevant scholarship (National Education Association [NEA], 1989).

The status of programs in higher education with large cohorts of women is of substantial interest to many administrators, faculty, and students. Reorganization trends in higher education have heightened the urgency to confront and evaluate the substance of widely offered curricula, including home economics and its associated programs. Despite the downward trend in the proportion of students choosing these program areas (Fritchner, 1973), home economics continued to be a viable degree choice. More than 200 four-year colleges and universities across the U.S. offer such programs (Food and Agricultural Education Information System [FAEIS], 1992). The programs produce nearly 15,000 total graduates annually (U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DOE], 1988-89). While "business and management" is the degree program area chosen overwhelmingly in recent years by both men and women, home economics ranked in the upper half of degree program areas chosen by female students (U.S. DOE, 1988-89). Nearly all (91%) home economics

degrees are awarded to women (FAEIS, 1991; U.S. DOE, 1988-89), making home economics the most female intensive program in academia. For women, it was more popular than 64% of all the other degree program areas tabulated by the U.S. Department of Education.

FAEIS data (1991, 1992) showed a substantial number of recent enrollments and degrees awarded in home economics programs having a strong business orientation, in particular "textiles and clothing, retail," with a concurrent decline in many of the traditional areas of home economics. In Fall 1991 (FAEIS, 1992) more students were enrolled in "retailing, merchandising" than any other area of academic specialization in such programs.

Nies (1990) identified "fashion merchandising" as a "rapid growth curricular area" with challenges for faculty development. Yet, while "fashion merchandising" has been singled out for future faculty development efforts, there is concern with the peripheral status of the subject area and marginal status of the faculty. A "scenario" acted out in recent years is the "targeting" of such programs for dissolution (Paoletti, 1992). Reflections from this experience were expressed by one sensitive, relocated female professor:

> If we had had the foresight to build bridges instead of burn them, to listen to dissent instead of stifling it, and to plan instead of reacting, we might have taken at least some of our programs and students with us. (p. 3)

Purpose of this Study

A focused investigation of curricula and programs emphasizing fashion merchandising needed to be conducted. The purpose of the research reported

in the present study was threefold: (1) to examine the context and substance of curricula that have emphasized specializations in fashion merchandising, (2) to identify infrastructures that have supported these programs, and (3) to probe issues that face administrators, faculty, and students engaged in such programs.

This timely study documents program dimensions and ramifications that faculty, administrators, and students face as realities of the 1990s are confronted. The study contributes fo filling a gap in knowledge of a pervasive curricular agenda and to shaping future curricular commitments. Changes in these curricular areas parallel changes in the status and roles of women and other socioeconomic changes. The results should be useful to the numerous departments and institutions nationwide that embrace the allied and associated subjects with a sincere desire to enhance the quality and integrity of higher education for its diverse participants.

Curricular History: A Context for the Present Study

There has been a dearth of systematically organized information on the curricular history and status of female differentiated programs in higher education. One noteworthy exception was a scholarly attempt to interpret the position of "women's studies" in academia, focusing on home economics as the context for analysis (Fritchner, 1973). Fritchner's investigation indicates that home economics served as an "umbrella" for women's traditional occupations, marriage and the family, and "newly created alternatives for women" (p. 21). "Ultimately students, especially female students, dictated program changes and development by their patterns of enrollment . . ." (p. 26). With respect for the objectives of its curriculum, "[home economics] drew on all disciplines and fields of knowledge stretching and tailoring them to relate to the family" (p. 119).

Fritchner found that home economics programs have been haunted by problems of identity, fragmented focus, status, and isolation from the academic mainstream (p. 132). Nearly two decades ago, now, she predicted the demise of home economics in higher education. This prediction was based on trends she observed, including (a) the "absolute loss" of home economics departments, (b) the "percentage loss" of students and funds, and (c) changes in names of academic programs (p. 157). Fritchner argued further that:

> Differential financial allotments and expenditures and differential curricular enrollment prompt the specialization and professionalization of women's traditional roles. This fact, unrecognized by home economists, advances the demise of home economics curricula. (p. 157)

Organizational assignments and stigmatized attitudes of administrators were indicative of the peripheral position of home economics over its curricular history. Identity and status problems of home economics in higher education were attributed to the circumstances of female isolation. Fritchner's (1973) case suggests that the shifting administrative position of "fashion merchandising" (nee home economics) within institutions reflects ambiguous conception of the subject areas. The following close up examination of "fashion merchandising" in higher education, provides some confirmation of Fritchner's observations.

Review of Literature

The educational outcomes quoted here, from a recent catalog promoting the study of fashion merchandising in higher education are both humorous and embarassingly stereotypical in this age of sex role liberation:

> Fashion merchandising is a natural for a lady because it equips her to plan and manage a gracious home while preparing for a profitable career. Gentlemen who venture into the world of fashion will discover a wonderful opportunity for leadership and financial gain. [Accredited College] General Catalog, 1985-87

This quote was indeed unique among materials discovered during an extensive review of fashion merchandising curricula and program literature that preceded our more focused study. What is conveyed by the naive and outmoded excerpt, however, to some dimension may reflect a lingering image of programs emphasizing fashion merchandising (Dickerson, 1991).

Even more disconcerting, the ambiguous status of "fashion merchandising" in academia is epitomized by the following observation:

> More undergraduates are enrolled in textiles and apparel merchandising--or fashion merchandising or whatever it is called--than any other specialization within textiles and clothing. Moreover, apparel merchandising is one of the largest majors in home economics, or whatever that may be called at various institutions. (Winakor, 1988, p. 31)

Attention to "fashion merchandising" instruction offered in colleges and universities resulted from growth in the number of students (mostly female) desiring preparation for retail fashion careers, reorganization

of collegiate units administering such programs, and concern for the balance and quality of liberal and professional education (Cassill & Leonas, 1984; Fair, Hamilton, & Norum, 1990; Garner & Buckley, 1988; Greenwood, 1972; Haynes, Cloud, & Lynch, 1991; Horn, 1981, 1984; Jolly, 1988; Kotsiopoulos, 1988; Kunz, 1986; Lind, 1989; Lucas, 1981; Pedersen, 1984; Rudd, 1981; Shim, 1984; Stowe, 1985; Summers, 1986; Sutton, 1984; Tucker, 1980; Winakor, 1988).

The previous authors have documented curriculum variables, student enrollments, and professional issues. However, they stopped short of discovering or organizing an integrative construct of the fashion merchandising curriculum or identifying institutional models for program administration. Unfortunately, most other published studies have failed to present an holistic view of the curriculum and have avoided addressing the real problems facing programs in these areas. The purpose of the following literature review is to focus on curricular and organizational elements that encompass fashion merchandising instruction. Relevant issues and questions that have been of special interest and under debate are cited with reference to pertinent articles.

Interest in "Fashion Merchandising"

Heightened interest in "fashion merchandising," especially by females, conveyed a general aura of the times. According to a mid-eighties nationwide interest survey conducted by Starch Inra Hooper (1984), the top ranked basic interests of women were "fashion and clothes." Men ranked "business" number one. These interests were different for both women and men a decade before, when women had ranked religion, food, and homemaking as their top interests; men had ranked sports, automobiles, and entertainment. Nonetheless, sustained interest in collegiate fashion

merchandising programs is evidenced by students enrolled, curricular advances, faculty hired (Association of Administrators of Home Economics [AAHE], 1985; Brandt, 1987; Cassill & Leonas, 1984; Fair, Hamilton, & Norum, 1990; Garner & Buckley, 1988; Lind, 1989; and others), and projected employment opportunities. Supply and demand forecasts in home economics related occupations indicated the greatest demand for jobs would be in marketing and merchandising (Coulter, Stanton, & Bobbitt, 1987). Other broader U.S. and world economic indicators have shown job growth trends in apparel and textiles, fashion industries, and retailing [see for example Census of Manufactures and Census of Retail Trade (1984, 1985), Index to International Statistics (1989), and Survey of Current Business (1989)]. Finally, despite recent bankruptcies and reorganization of major retailers, fashion retailing appears to be a fertile field in the evolving service economy (Fiorito, 1991; Popcorn, 1991).

Definitional Complexities

Program publications from various kinds of institutions in the larger population (quota sample of 200 surveyed)[1] have promoted "the field of fashion merchandising" as a generic term that "covers design, manufacture, and marketing of both apparel and home furnishings";[2] and as inclusive of "all industries and services connected with fashion: manufacturing, distribution, advertising, publishing, and consulting--anything encompassing any type of merchandise or service."[3] "Preparation for entry into the retail department store, speciality [sic] and/or low margin store business" with little limitation to the type of merchandise (including such products as apparel, china, cosmetics, domestics, entertainment centers, furniture, interiors, shoes and others);[4] and descriptions of "retailing" as "the

final link in the chain that reaches from the producer or manufacturer to the final customer"[5] further elaborate what the teaching of "fashion merchandising" has encompassed.

The scope and confounding of terms used in conjunction with fashion merchandising was also encountered when consulting surveys administered by the U.S. Department of Education (Brandt, 1987; Malitz, 1981, 1987, 1991). Liberal and somewhat arbitrary statistical accounts of various educational degrees emphasizing fashion merchandising have been recorded using the Higher Education General Information Statistics (HEGIS) codes up until 1982, and beginning in that year under the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP). Categorical designations which have variously incorporated "fashion merchandising" instruction and are used to collect data on degrees awarded, include apparel and accessories marketing; clothing, apparel, and textiles management, production, and services; business home economics; design; fashion merchandising; footwear marketing; general marketing; home economics; jewelry marketing; retailing; textiles and clothing; and others. As can be seen, it is quite confusing to individuals remotely familiar with dimensions of the field to grasp this diversity.

Professional Issues

Merchandising has experienced a diversity of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary developments with a confluence of conceptual and resource issues. Akin to consumer science programs, fashion merchandising programs have evolved from a collection of disciplines, and the programs have been based largely within home economics units (Fair et al., 1990; Kroll & Hunt, 1980; Lind, 1989; Paoletti, 1985; Stampfl, 1982, 1983). Consumer science and merchandising faculty have faced similar "overtly problematic"

professional concerns during the last decade. The two program areas have shared administrative "turf" and content issues as they have continued to evolve and deemphasize traditional home economics as the guardian discipline. In consumer science programs and the allied areas of merchandising, there has been long standing and immediate concern with the relevancy of educational programs and employment opportunities for graduates, as well as theory building (Fair et al., 1990; Goldsmith & Vogel, 1991; Jolly, 1988; Kotsiopoulos, 1988; Lind, 1989). While programs affiliated with the American Home Economics Association might have some sort of accredited academic core, some critics suggest traditional home economics programs may impede or be irrelevant to individuals in corporate consumer affairs and likewise in the retail merchandise business sector (e.g., Goldsmith & Vogel, 1991; Kunz, 1986). In their critique of consumer science programs, Goldsmith and Vogel noted that to date these curricula still are sorely lacking standardization among institutions.

Studies conducted with reference to the field of clothing and textiles, including instructional programs for fashion merchandising, resulted in similar conclusions. Clothing and textile programs were found to lack curricular focus and to have disjointed specializations, to be embroiled in name change and administrative placement debates, and to have insufficient resources--faculty (Ph.D.s), facilities, and funds--to support instruction and research (Horn, 1981, 1984; Kunz, 1986; Lind, 1989; Rudd, 1981; Stowe, 1985; Winakor, 1988). Nontheless, the "holistic nature of the field" and "career outlets" were believed to be strengths and opportunities for future directions in the allied subject areas (Horn, 1984).

There have been serious recent motions calling for distinct disciplinary status for merchandising within the domain of textiles and apparel. Winakor (1988) contended that "the fashion merchandising field within textiles and clothing has something unique to offer and is neither a substitute nor a clone for business administration programs" (p. 31). Challenges have included developing a strong research base that serves appropriate interests shared by business, industry, and the teacher scholar (Dickson, Gifford, & Kotsiopulos, 1986; Winakor, 1988). Dickson et al. were advocates of "cooperative teaching and research with faculty in other disciplines," particularly business schools (p. 48). A flyer accompanying a recent newsletter of the International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) (Good, 1992) suggested that there may be a number of institutions involved in developing "concepts/competencies" for "apparel, textiles, retailing, or related area" (sic). ITAA's strategic planning committee, according to Good, is attempting to facilitate sharing of curriculum development "so that we are not all re-inventing the wheel."

Conclusion

The professional literature reviewed indicated there was a serious and compelling need to conduct a systematic investigation of concerns and issues manifested in curricula and programs emphasizing fashion merchandising. The study presented in this paper was conducted in response to the needs evident in the literature. Implications of the professional literature and Fritchner's theory are discussed further in conjunction with the research findings reported in the following sections.

Research Phases and Methods

There were several phases of the study focus on fashion merchandising programs. First, an exhaustive literature and catalog review coupled with site visits to prominent fashion and technical institutes for administrative briefings provided a preliminary research framework. Next, bachelor's degree program audits and inquiries of representatives from highly positioned institutions were conducted. Administrative and curricular questions of particular interest and under debate in scholarly literature accompanied the curriculum audit. Questions were formulated to address prevailing dilemmas in the field. The schedule included questions regarding infrastructure that supported the fashion merchandising instructional program, i.e. student enrollments, advisors, budget, facilities, research, faculty and staff, and other academic resources. Finally, the data were reported using an "ideal type" analytical model (Silverman, 1985).

Program Identification

Sourcebooks (The College Blue Book, 1983; [Peterson's] Guide to Four-Year Colleges, Lehman, 1987) were consulted to identify and locate post-secondary institutions that offered instructional programs in fashion merchandising. More than 500 post-secondary institutions offering various fashion merchandising instructional programs were listed in these sources. A mass mail inquiry letter was sent to a quota sample of 200 schools including four-year, two-year, and certificated programs emphasizing fashion merchandising. Program materials were received from all 200 schools in the inquiry mailing. Information about programs was also

obtained from five site visits. These materials were examined to record program characteristics and features.

Rationale for Sample Size and Selection Criteria

Initially, an attempt was made to analyze and classify information derived from the larger quota sample of over 200 programs. Catalogs and advising materials received from targeted departments were the data source. However, the data processing became increasingly unwieldy because of the degree of program diversity and in some instances curricular disarray. The permutations and combinations of terms connected to the subjects, i.e. fashion merchandising, marketing, retailing, etc. seemingly approached their mathematical limit.

At that point, several research methodologists were consulted. Subsequently, it was decided that a carefully selected "quality" small sample would yield an appropriate reflection of the larger curricular scenario. The strategic decision to select 10 highly positioned programs for an extended examination was based on Silverman's "ideal-type" rationale for handling diversity such as we encountered.

Gourman's (e.g. 1985, 1987, 1989) widely circulated publications ranking home economics and other programs are very controversial and were ruled out as a primary sample selection reference. After a thorough search, including contacting Professor Gourman, no recent scholarly commendations of his ratings were located. On the contrary, several scholars have written scathing criticisms of Gourman's work (see for example, Webster, 1986).

We were extremely thorough in the application of criteria used for honing the sample to 10 programs selected for the culminating audit. Variables to support selection of highly positioned institutions were

determined from a combination of studies indicating institutional and program quality. Selection criteria were made up of factors including institutional and departmental enrollments, degrees awarded, faculty and student research productivity and publishing, participation in professional conferences, and affiliations with top rated business and economics departments. The sample of highly considered institutions was supported by a host of reports indicating institutional position and program quality and interconnectedness of scholarship with the curriculum[6] (Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing [ACPTC], 1985-1990; FAEIS, 1991, 1992; Gibbons & Fish, 1991; Griffith & Helmick, 1989; Hattendorf, 1991;[7] Helmick & Griffith, 1988; Hira & Dufresne, 1991; ITAA, 1991; Oliver & Mahoney, 1991).

Three programs were selected from each prominent type of incorporated institutional administrative structure in which the programs were located: consumer/family/human resources, home economics, and human ecology. The intention of this selection was not to single out or identify specific institutions. Rather, the purpose was to construct a profile based on prevailing incorporated units with highly rated infrastructures that encompassed fashion merchandising programs.

The top rated institutions were generally larger land grant universities. The sample exception was one small, private, women-oriented liberal arts college. This exceptional college was included because program information indicated that it combined elements of the prevailing conceptual ideal that emerged during reviews and synthesis of literature and preliminary examination of the larger population.[8] This institution was noted for its interdepartmental business/fashion curriculum and cross campus administrative partnership. The college emphasizes career and lifestyle

development for contemporary women.

Audit and Questioning Procedures

The standard form used to audit the curriculum of institutions in the present study was adapted from the instrument used by Stampfl (1983). To gain some preliminary insight, it was useful to review the design and results of Stampfl's (1982) national study of consumer science programs in higher education because fashion merchandising and consumer science share common administrative and curricular connections. His results were inextricably associated with home economics units.[9] Entries on the current audit form were generated by examining catalogs of highly considered programs and random checks with catalogs of other programs known to offer merchandising specialties, and also evolved as the initial set of telephone interviews took place.

Telephone communications were essential to data gathering, including screening for appropriate respondents, arranging interviews, alerting designated respondents to mailed audit forms and interview schedules, and prompting return of the data collection instruments and relevant institutional documents.[10] Written telephone introductions and explanatory letters including the research questions assisted in the standardization of data recording. Intermittent debriefings between the research developers and telephone liaisons facilitated consistent data collection. Telephone interviews varied from 40 to 80 minutes, depending upon the extent of written information the respondent had already supplied and the clarity of information provided. The typical telephone interview was 45-60 minutes long.

Each of the selected programs underwent a standardized curriculum audit

of unit credits which were grouped by common courses and allowed for listing additional courses. All of the institutions studied except two used the semester course system. To calculate equivalent weight in the composites, quarter system units were converted to semester units. Credits in the various course categories were checked for balance with the reported total credits required per program. The detailed audit accounted for a composite of over 1,200 semester course credits.

Completed course profiles and responses to questions were mailed to respondents for verification. Each profile was then re-audited and cross checked by two researchers who co-verified required units and reviewed the figures for internal consistency. The data represent less than .025 variance at any check point for discrepant numbers. These insignificant deviations were due to counting additional units expressed in the upper range required to satisfy prerequisites (e.g. 3-6 units of math might be required for a student to master a required course in algebra, calculus, or trigonometry), or ranges of units that could be split among content categories by choosing from various options.

Findings: Institutional Characteristics

History and Profile

Among the institutions studied, a fashion merchandising oriented undergraduate degree program first was offered as long ago as 1926.[11] Another was first offered in the 1950s, and another in the 1960s. Most of the institutions studied first offered fashion merchandising more recently either in the 1970s or 1980s. Programs were continuing to evolve.

Total undergraduate enrollments at the institutions studied ranged from 1,000 at the liberal arts college to from 12,650 to 55,000 (1988 figures) per institution at the larger institutions. The median was 27,000. The estimated number of fashion merchandising oriented bachelor degree graduates per year from the individual institutions ranged from 20-120, with a median of 50. There were an estimated 50 to over 500 undergraduate majors with fashion merchandising emphases at the institutions as of Fall 1987. Most had over 200. An estimated range of only 1% to as many as 70% of the undergraduate enrollment in the whole incorporated units (i.e., consumer/family/human resources, home economics, human ecology, or liberal arts) was in fashion merchandising oriented programs. Typically, nearly a third of the undergraduates from the larger incorporated units studied were merchandising oriented.

In addition to bachelor's degrees, 8 of the 10 selected institutions also offered master's degrees, and six offered doctorates with a merchandising emphasis. One institution was developing both master's and Ph.D. degree programs with merchandising emphases. No graduate degrees were offered by the liberal arts college.

Incorporated Titles

Fashion merchandising programs were examined within the context of their larger incorporated administrative units, that is, those titled "consumer/family/human resources," "home economics," "human ecology," or similar names evolving from what has been traditionally coined "home economics." The various administrative unit titles, bachelor's degree titles, and titles of specializations of the 10 institutions audited are shown in Table 1. Nine different degree titles and 10 different titles of specializations are represented in the findings.

Insert Table 1 about here

Departments

The 10 programs studied were based in departments with 10 different titles. A myriad of incorporated department or division areas are associated with fashion merchandising (see Figure 1). Of the 67 associated department and division titles the 10 audited institutions represented, there were 58 different yet to some extent equivalent titles within eight generic subject areas. The simplified traditional and innovative subject areas were apparel and textiles, child and family, consumer, foods and nutrition, home economics, housing and interiors, merged and interdisciplinary subjects. These generic areas were associated with

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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most of the audited programs regardless of their broader administrative

titles. At these institutions, fashion merchandising typically was positioned among subject areas including apparel, consumer science, design, environment, and textiles.

Specializations

The titles of intradepartmental specializations associated with Fashion Merchandising are clustered in Figure 2. Ten of the most fitting specializations were the audit subjects.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Findings: Curriculum

A circular profile of findings from the curricula audited is presented in Figure 3. The total composite of credit units required for bachelors' degrees with the targeted specializations at the institutions audited ranged from 1,232 to 1,274 ($\bar{X}$=123-127). Programs were composed of course units in general education (41%), business administration (16%), fashion product knowledge (15%), fashion business process (9%), options and electives (12%), integrative subjects (5%), career, field, and work experience (2%).

Insert Figure 3 about here

More specific breakdowns of these areas are presented in Tables 2 through 9. The tabular data were footnoted to highlight key words and the hybrid rhetoric that underscored operational and philosophical variables. Data were presented in ranges of credit units required to demonstrate the diversity, and mean credit units required ($\bar{X}$, n=10) to show category weight across the whole composite.

Cross Campus Interdisciplinary Components

Interdisciplinary (cross campus) requirements of fashion merchandising instruction underpin the major focus.

General Education. General education courses develop intellectual capacities prerequisite to the professional course sequence and lifestyle. General education courses were required mostly at the undergraduate level, and clustered in behavioral and social sciences; culture and humanities; life, natural, and physical sciences; mathematics; technology; and

electives (Table 2). All (100%) of the selected institutions required courses in economics ($\bar{X}$=6 units) and college level math (algebra, trigonometry, or calculus ($\bar{X}$=4). Most (90%-70%) required chemistry ($\bar{X}$=5), English composition ($\bar{X}$=4.5), communications/speech ($\bar{X}$=3.5), psychology ($\bar{X}$=3.5), sociology ($\bar{X}$=3), fine arts ($\bar{X}$=3), statistics ($\bar{X}$=2.5), and computer science ($\bar{X}$-2.5). General education courses were usually specified in most areas required, except in culture and humanities where free electives in addition to specified courses were required.

Insert Table 2 about here

Business Administration. Cross campus business administration courses that focus on basic and advanced business principles were a substantial component of the programs audited, ranging from 11 to 36 units required per program, Table 3. The average number required was 20 units in various areas of business administration. Marketing was required in all these programs ($\bar{X}$=>3.5 units) and most required accounting ($\bar{X}$=3.5) and management ($\bar{X}$=2.5). Cross campus advertising, promotion, and retailing courses were required in

Insert Table 3 about here

several programs while others required specialized intradepartmental courses in these areas (see Table 6). Designated electives in business administration are required in half of these programs ($\bar{X}$=4.5). Additional courses in business might be chosen from other electives (see Table 9). About two-thirds of these courses were upper division requirements, with

accounting making up most of the lower division units.

Interdisciplinary Concentrations. The institutions offered elective courses which could result in interdisciplinary concentrations related to fashion merchandising. The five most popular interdisciplinary concentrations, in order of their ranking by the respondents, were marketing, advertising, management, consumer behavior, and personnel administration. Eleven other popular concentrations were also reported (Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

Intradepartmental Components

The course content required within the major department was divided among fashion product knowledge, fashion business process, career, field, and work experience.

Fashion Product Knowledge. At least half of the intradepartmental course units required were product knowledge (Table 5). Product knowledge clustered in three major areas: apparel, textiles, and generic (analytical or artistic). In all of the selected programs, basic and advanced textiles, ranging from 3 to 7 units ($\bar{X}$=5.5), were required. Most (70%) required units in cultural or historical apparel ($\bar{X}$=2). Other courses (3-6 units) most frequently required were quality evaluation,

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Insert Table 5 about here

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textile economic and environmental issues, and current topics. An array

of electives with a product knowledge focus were required ($\bar{X}$=3.5-4.5 units).

Fashion Business Processes. Courses in fashion business processes offered in the major department provide a specialized focus on the interplay between consumers, fashion industries, and merchandising functions. From 0-30 ($\bar{X}$=11.5-12) units were required in these areas (Table 6). The wide variation in the range of units required per institution was relative to the number of cross campus business administration units available (see Table 3). Merchandising (2-7 units, $\bar{X}$=3) and retailing (3-6 units, $\bar{X}$=2.5) were required within most of the major departments. Advertising and promotion were also frequently required. Other more specialized content was variously required including computerized processes or could be chosen from intradepartmental electives.

Insert Table 6 about here

Career Development, Field and Work Experience. The institutions studied offered a spectrum of professional development opportunities (Table 7). Half required some sort of career or professional development course, e.g., occupational search, or interview practice (1-3 units), while some incorporated such material in other courses. Each institution offered a work or field experience component. These ranged from 3 up to a maximum of 15 credits counted toward the major, except at three

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Insert Table 7 about here

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institutions that set no specific maximum. At half of the institutions

work experience was required, and at half it was elective. Several institutions required concurrent seminars, typically 1 unit, in retail occupations and retail experience while others required pre and post experience related courses. One of the institutions required a cooperative education[12] experience in fashion merchandising. Field trips were required in several programs and national and international elective study tours were available at half of the institutions. One institution offered a visiting student exchange as part of its elective component.

Integrative Components

Ideally, integrative coursework should represent the major philosophical features of the incorporated departments and their relationship to the fashion merchandising emphasis. A composite of the integrative subjects required by the institutions studied is presented in Table 8. The range of required integrative units reported was 0-15 ($\overline{X}$=7), with 8 of 10 respondents reporting units in the various incorporated areas of consumer/family/human resources, home economics or human ecology. The most frequently reported integrative units were cross departmental electives (i.e. internal within the incorporated administrative units) ranging from 6-15 units ($\overline{X}$=3.5) and consumer science, ranging from 3-6 units ($\overline{X}$=2). Two respondents reported "textiles" as integrative units (these were counted in Table 5).

Insert Table 8 about here

Options and Electives

Optional or elective courses ranged from 0-30 credit units ($\bar{X}$=12-15), Table 9. Programs typically did not allow for many fully "free" or unrestricted electives ($\bar{X}$=3.5-5). Most electives and options were "directed" to be chosen from lists of particular business, fashion, or professional experience courses.

Insert Table 9 about here

Findings: Infrastructure

Faculty and Staff

The individual fashion merchandising programs were staffed by from 0 to 6 full-time faculty ($\bar{X}$=2.6) and 0 to 12 part-time faculty ($\bar{X}$=2.5) who had credentials in the specialized subject areas. More than half of the programs had one or two full-time faculty in the fashion merchandising area. Three had five or six. Four reported there were no part-time faculty, four reported three or fewer, and one reported eight. The liberal arts college was an exceptional case where there were no full-time faculty and 12 part-time faculty staffing the fashion merchandising program. Individual programs employed from one to six ($\bar{X}$=2.9) faculty with Ph.D.s in fashion merchandising or closely related fields including apparel, management, marketing, and textile science. Four respondents reported from 1 to 10 ($\bar{X}$=1.9) faculty with master's degrees, including MBAs and MFAs. Staff included administrative managers, advising coordinators, graduate assistants, and lecturers from the retail apparel business community.

Research

Research areas of merchandising faculty are shown in the circular composite, Figure 4. Forty-five topics represented the research in progress by merchandising faculty at the institutions studied. The topics

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Insert Figure 4 about here

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reported were organized by key words in alphabetical order of the frequency of their mention. Nearly half of the topics reported were consumer/

marketing (24%) or product (20%) oriented. These topics covered such areas as consumer behavior, e.g. perceptions of brand, price, and quality; purchase strategies, consumer economics, e.g. socioeconomic determinants of expenditures, consumer segments, e.g. cable/video shoppers, maturity market, apparel and textiles products, e.g. behavioral, historical, and technical studies; protective clothing, thermal comfort. The balance of topics reported were business oriented. They included management (17%), e.g. labor relations, personnel, training, sales, service, small business; retailing (15%), e.g. inventory systems, promotion, retail consumer behavior, rural retailing, store name recognition, and industry (6%), e.g. apparel in the state, apparel vendor-buyer relations, women's work. About 11% of the reported research topics were global studies, e.g. international consumer, international industries, international trade. Merchandising faculty were also engaged in computer systems research (5% of the reported topics).

Facilities

The most commonly reported facilities that served merchandising programs (70%) were historic apparel and textile collections, including on-campus museums and exhibition galleries. As many institutions (7 of 10) also reported having their own or access to computer labs for computerized merchandising and computerized design. Some computer labs were interdepartmental and one was shared with business. Six of 10 institutions reported having textile science research facilities including comfort research labs, conditioning rooms, and other testing labs that involved the merchandising program. Four institutions had apparel design and production labs associated with the merchandising program. Other facilities affiliated with merchandising programs at individual institutions included

a Fashion Service Center, Center for Retailing Study, Consumer Behavior Lab, a Visual Merchandising Lab, a Merchandising Library, and an interdepartmental Learning Resources Room with video carrels.

External Advisors

Most (7) of the institutions studied had external advisory groups for their fashion merchandising programs and establishing one was underway at another. The number of advisors varied from 8 to 20 per program. Representatives from all along the allied soft goods industries served as members of advisory groups, for example, designers, fiber and textile producers, apparel manufacturers, wholesale distributors, and retailers. Members represented local, state, regional, and national business and consumer interests and also included education, government, media, and museum representatives. The organized business community was represented by chamber of commerce and retail council members.

Program Costs and Funding

Half of the respondents (90% reporting) indicated that, compared to other programs in their incorporated units, "merchandising" cost significantly less and was very cost effective while generating substantial student enrollment. Three respondents believed merchandising program costs were about the same as other programs. Only one respondent stated that their merchandising program cost more than other incorporated programs. Costs were not broken down by program at some institutions, thus it was difficult to ascertain comparative figures for services, supplies, travel, and other expenses. The range per year (1988 figures) for faculty time costs (50% reporting) was $24,000 to $138,000; for services and supplies (40% reporting) was $500-$5,000 which included duplicating and

telephone costs; and for travel (70% reporting) was $500-$1,300 per year plus in one case donated tickets. One respondent reported an estimated annual allocation of $50,000 for the total merchandising program. Faculty were responsible for raising funds and in-kind donations in one case.

Distinguishing Features

What distinguishes fashion merchandising programs from retailing or marketing offered in business administration? Many students, particularly women, may seek programs in the incorporated subjects associated with consumer science, home economics, or human ecology because of their humanistic orientation and the unique attention given in these programs to the integration of career and lifestyle variables (Young & Johnson, 1986). Representatives of institutions were asked how their fashion merchandising programs were distinguished from business marketing. The composite of open-ended responses to the question suggested an <u>interdependence</u> that, in fact, incorporates a major reliance on business marketing. This concept of interdependence as a whole, was not significantly different from the essence of each independent response. The distinguishing features identified were concurrent irrespective of the particular organizational structure. The "consumer approach" was foremost in the statements given to articulate distinguishing features, e.g., "a greater 'real' consumer focus . . . with knowledge of the apparel and textile industry and its internal and external environments." Programs were distinguished by a management process focus with various emphases on consumer, design, and product, even where the programs were reported to be either "apparel-textile management" or "retailing," and "<u>not</u> fashion merchandising." Within the liberal arts

framework, the fashion emphasis was described as a "50/50" combination with business.

Specialized internships developed with fashion oriented merchants and in the greater fashion manufacturing and merchandising industry were also cited as features that distinguished programs from business marketing. One respondent remarked that many business students deliberately seek approval to participate in these special internships. Cross campus interdependence was further evidenced by statements suggesting retail merchandising was a core focus in apparel and textile programs but limited emphasis was accorded retailing in the business schools (e.g., "our merchandising faculty teach the only retail course in the business school," "business has only one retailing course," "the business school doesn't teach retailing," "there is no business school on campus").

Value of the Merchandising Emphasis

Open ended remarks in which the respondents expressed the value of merchandising as part of the incorporated programs (i.e., consumer/family/human resources, home economics, human ecology, or liberal arts) were concurrent in three measures. An aggregate of statements given were clustered with reference to (a) quality, (b) affiliations, and (c) demand.

More than half of the respondents' statements highlighted <u>program quality</u>. "Solid liberal education as well as solid professional preparation," "relevant, current, and demanding subject matter," "information concerning needs of consumers that has an impact on the marketplace," "business perspective," "taught by well-qualified faculty," "faculty with extensive retail experience and executive training," and "accreditation" [AHEA] are representative citations of the qualities

reported. About a third of the respondents' statements referred to professional affiliations, including job placement and career opportunities for students. "Unique linkages with the business community," "a superb industry advisory board," and "alumnae in prestigious careers" were representative of these valued features. Finally, student demand (e.g. "highest enrollment," "only department with such a degree") was another factor considered valuable to the institutions studied.

Analysis, Synthesis, and Ideal Type

The findings of this study, in part, extend the theory of curricular history proposed by Fritchner (1973), that is, "the demise of home economics" in its traditional context. Given the professional literature and institutions studied, the conceptual ideal is a whole program that incorporates contemporary needs of its largely women student constituency. It combines a complimentary blend of general and professional education, product knowledge, and business process together with an integrative philosophical core that supports modern consumer interests.

Diversity was a complicating characteristic of the findings. The information synthesized from this investigation was presented here in "ideal type" tabular composites to accommodate the diversity.[13] Tables 2-9 illustrate administrative and rhetorical interconnections of general and professional education components emphasized in professional literature and incorporated in course descriptions. Displays of the data were organized to accentuate common and distinctive aspects of the individual programs.

The audit affirmed an interdisciplinary framework of subjects that undergirded fashion merchandising specializations at highly positioned institutions. Curricular dimensions may be gauged by combining the statistics presented in Tables 2-9 to create an index (i.e. percent of institutions studied plus mean total units required).[14] The foundation of the cross campus curriculum includes designated key courses in the following basic disciplines (listed in the rank order determined by their composite indices):[15] 1) economics, 2) advanced mathematics, 3) speech

communication, 4) psychology, 5) sociology, 6) chemistry, 7) computer science, and others required for general education.

The intradepartmental core that embodies fashion merchandising specializations is comprised foremost of specialized courses in 1) fashion product knowledge emphasizing textiles and the cultural and historical aspects of apparel, 2) fashion business processes including marketing, merchandising, and retailing, 3) field and work experience. Consumer interest and ecological themes are interwoven with these areas. Consumer science was the single most, yet weak, integrative subject area of required integrative courses. A "smorgasbord" of other courses elected from across the larger incorporated administrative units also are considered integrative subjects. Marketing, and then accounting, are the dominant subject areas among the supporting business administration courses required in the programs studied. In addition, the most popular elective concentrations in conjunction with fashion merchandising were 1) marketing, 2) advertising, 3) management, and other business subjects.

Program options provided closely associated variations of the fashion merchandising focus (e.g. home furnishings). Elective courses offered opportunities to enhance program features such as professional experience, business or product oriented courses. In view of these findings and other studies (e.g. Lind, 1989) that have shown prevailing fashion merchandising programs to increasingly emphasize "professional careers" rather than "personal use," the catalog description quoted in the literature review is assuredly obsolete in the broader contemporary context of the field.

Institutions audited were selected with reference to their incorporated administrative unit titles: Consumer/Family/Human Resources,

Home Economics, Human Ecology, and Liberal Arts. The various titles of incorporated administrative units, nine different bachelors' degree titles, and 10 different titles of specializations represented in the current study are a microcosm of what complicates the larger population of hundreds of institutions with similarly equivalent offerings having numerous prevailing titles.

Relative to ascribed attributes, fashion merchandising emerged as a seemingly cost effective professional emphasis at these institutions. This "cost effectiveness" should be reexamined, in light of Fritchner's conclusions. Student demand, faculty and staff, research, special facilities, linkages with business, and external advisors were alleged and integral components of the infrastructure that supported curricular advances and instructional programs with an emphasis in fashion merchandising.

Implications

Nomenclature

The results of this study dramatize the identity issues facing the fields in this study. Fashion merchandising in higher education is associated with administrative units, curricula, program areas, specializations, and a larger field identified with a redundancy of interchangeably used terms. Simply identifying background factors such as trends in degrees by titles and program areas pertinent to the focus of this study was perplexing. Information had been classified and counted in different ways. Numerous and various program titles have contributed to a general data base problem.

Mixed usage of "marketing," "merchandising," and "retailing" has created a kaleidoscopic vocabulary that complicates professional communications. This was again obvious in a recent publication where prevailing specializations were grouped with slashes between terms, i.e. "retail/fashion merchandising/marketing" (Fair et al., 1990).

Titles of the larger administrative units in which merchandising programs reflect the replacement of terms usually represented as "home economics." At the institutions studied, fashion merchandising had established a specialized identity distinct from areas traditionally associated with clothing and textiles. Two programs had retained "home economics" as a degree title; however, the trend seems to be toward other contemporary, innovative, and more descript names.

The term "fashion merchandising" was intensely stigmatized among some of the respondents. Representatives of several of the institutions studied

were adamant that programs were not "fashion merchandising" but rather "apparel-textile management," "apparel and textile marketing," or "retailing." However, these programs were indeed composed of curricular elements that emphasized and actually used the terms "fashion," "retailing," "merchandising," "management," and "marketing" in combination and in some instances interchangeably.

In recent name change arguments, there was considerable concern from ACPTC (now ITAA) committee members that "fashion" has a negative image among business and university administrators (Dickerson, April 1991). In the poll designed to select a preferred name, 32 titles grouped by similar forms were placed on the ballot, and 44 other additional titles were added by the respondents. By a small margin, "apparel" (vs. "clothing") was a more favored term, and placement of "textiles" before apparel was the outcome (ACPTC, 1990). ITAA's (1991) newly adopted mission statement included "retailing" but made no reference to "fashion merchandising." Given the change from "Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing" (ACPTC) to "International Textiles and Apparel Association" (ITAA), it seems fitting that wherever the contextual usage is appropriate, "apparel" should replace the term, "clothing." However, more consideration needs to be given to use of the terms, "fashion" and "merchandising" in the broadest sense versus more restrictive or exclusive alternatives. For instance, "fashion" is inclusive of the array of consumer and family products and services. Degree titles need to reflect the substance of the curriculum, yet be sufficiently generic.

Others have also acknowledged that lack of uniform expression may detract from the professional impression of a field (Burton & Bowers, 1980;

Dickerson, September 1991), and perhaps contribute to its demise (Fritchner, 1973). Action taken to formalize the newly renamed ITAA launched an effort to codify identity of the textiles and apparel field. Efforts need to be expanded to facilitate uniformity of expression across the field and associated areas.

Teaching and Scholarship

Nebulous terminology is intertwined with instructional and scholarly objectives. Some programs specifically emphasized "apparel merchandising and marketing" to prepare for careers in the international textile and apparel industries. Other programs were more generic; students are prepared to "retail" a variety of consumer goods and/or services, "merchandising all products to the consumer."

Substantive studies were completed during the past two decades engaging key constituents of the "fashion merchandising" field, i.e. educators, graduates, and employers, in pedagogical issues, "the struggle to translate the scholarship of the field to the classroom in meaningful ways" (Fair et al., 1990, p. 29). The institutions studied have generally responded to the extent that there was a consistent required core of economics, marketing, mathematics, and textiles with an interdependent mix of other business processes and product knowledge, as observed in the tabular curricular framework (Tables 2-9). The profile of merchandising faculty research, to some extent, reflected curricular emphases. At the institutions studied there have been departmental administrative mergers and philosophical shifts of traditional subject areas with which fashion merchandising is associated. This has extended environmental, ethical, and global aspects of the teaching and research framework. Pedersen (1984)

and Stowe (1985) have alluded to human ecology as a context for teaching and research. Implications of these areas and a consumer focus for merchandising need to be much further developed (see for example, Bubolz & Sontag, 1991).

Integration. In the early eighties, Horn (1984) directed attention to the curricular and philosophical fragmentation in clothing and textiles, that is, "inability to articulate a strong sense of purpose and a relationship to a larger and significant integrated system" (p. 5). Since then, consumer interest has been the most generally supported reason for associating fashion merchandising with the myriad of traditional, merged and innovative interdisciplinary areas (Fair et al., 1990; Sutton, 1984). The present study confirmed, in part, incorporation of consumer oriented integrative coursework.[16] However, some so called integrative coursework, mostly freely elected, appeared at best to be too diverse, seemingly incoherent, and at worst, completely irrelevant. In some instances, curriculum components appeared to accommodate political interests in traditionally structured subjects rather than reflect the integration of current theoretical and practical ideals.

To support the integrative purpose and to enhance the integrative qualities of prevailing programs, curricula should bring together subject matter attuned to contemporary realities. This should include courses that incorporate the growing <u>new</u> scholarship on work and family relations, quality of life, women in business, consumer issues and services giving emphasis to both consumer and business perspectives, environmental sensitivity, ethical decision making, dynamic and contemporary theories

taking into account roles unique in women's career development (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Hensel, 1991; Riley, 1969; and others). Professional experience was integral to departmental offerings in all the programs studied, and experience courses were variously implemented. In conjunction with professional experiences, career development would be a fitting integrative program dimension.

Working Model. The findings and synthesis of this study were presented here as a "working model" that could be developed further to serve as a prototype for accreditation[17] and articulation.[18] This working model might also be useful for integrating ITAA's evolving set of curriculum "competencies" relevant to the specializations associated with fashion merchandising (Damhorst, 1991).[19]

Interprofessional Relations

Teacher scholars in the evolving fields of consumer science, fashion merchandising, and associated areas have been preoccupied with building and defending their academic substance, garnering institutional resources, and maintaining their professional reputations. Even at highly positioned institutions, somewhat ad hoc infrastructures have supported the development of contemporary and innovative instructional and research systems that encompass fashion merchandising. In view of the interdependent disciplinary connections, it is proposed that the continuing evolution of the field would be bolstered by more attention to interprofessional relations. Rather than dwelling on how to distinguish business marketing and fashion merchandising programs, a more fruitful approach would involve collaboration and integration (Follett, 1924; Fox & Urwick, 1983; Fritchner, 1973).

Fritchner warned that segregation and isolation "killed" home economics (p. 179).[20]

Enhancing interprofessional relations might call for a national conference[21] bringing together entities with mutual interests in the organization and administration of fashion merchandising programs in a liberal studies, applied marketplace, or business school framework. The purpose of the conference would be to engage participants in a dialogue on (a) how to cooperate, (b) nomenclature, and (c) curricular amendments. Conference development and participation could be coordinated through interested professional associations such as the American Collegiate Retailing Association (ACRA), the American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI), the American Marketing Association (AMA), the International Textiles and Apparel Association (ITAA), the Joint Council on Economic Education (JCEE), the National Commission for Cooperative Education (NCCE), and related trade associations. The conference agenda and subsequent activities might consider or feature proposals to develop intra or intercampus centers, institutes, or consortiums to facilitate cooperative teaching, research, and consultation; intracampus advisory committees; faculty and student exchanges; academic and business partnerships; post graduation tracking; joint graduate programs; a unique scholarly journal--perhaps an annual issue--with a specialized cross disciplinary focus, and other models for collaboration.

Conclusion

Administrators, faculty, and students in program areas associated in this study should be alerted to the evidence that supports Fritchner's theory of curricular history, i.e. "the demise of home economics" and its

implications for women in higher education. An awareness of this context as well as an enlightened approach to curriculum development should facilitate program reconfiguration, whether it be in the higher or lower levels of academia, in business education, consumer science, liberal studies, proprietary schools, and/or some combination of these settings.

A major result of this study was the curricular framework conceived from analysis of course structure and course requirements. This framework sets up a systematic format that invites further research to examine to what extent there is consistency of curriculum in the general population of institutions, and whether it varies by such factors as administrative unit title, institutional size, department missions, and other situational factors.

Footnotes

[1]Procedures are explained in the subsequent "Research Phases and Methods" section of this report.

[2]Certificated fashion school.

[3]Proprietary business college.

[4]Land grant university.

[5]Technical institute.

[6]Increasingly, the quality of higher education is judged in terms of the relationship of research to teaching (Coleman, 1992).

[7]Hattendorf's (1991) scholarly gamut of educational ratings consists of retrospective and current studies having credible methodologies.

[8]Silverman (1985) indicated that "the identification of deviant cases can serve to increase the reliability and inclusiveness of analytic schemes" (p. 21).

[9]Stampfl (1983) attempted to completely define the universe of four-year consumer science programs in the United States and then to study in depth 27 representative programs. He collated numerous profiles of individual programs. Extensive descriptive information was presented including required general subjects, major and interdisciplinary coursework.

[10]Comprehensive directions for telephone survey methods are given in Dillman (1978).

[11]See Paoletti (1985) for additional historical perspective.

[12]Cooperative education is formal, paid, work experience with a highly structured academic counterpart. Differing from field experience and internship, it is a "more intensive" partnership between employer, school, and student.

[13]The ideal type is a working model, that is, research instrument used "to analyze or confront empirical reality." It is composed of "concepts based on the synthesis of many concrete individual cases and their accentuation into a unified analytical construct" (Silverman, 1985, p. 42).

[14]In qualitative research, simple counting procedures are valuable. "Such counting helps to avoid the temptation to use merely supportive gobbets of information to support the researcher's interpretation" (Silverman, 1985, p. 17).

[15]Indices calculated by combining from Tables 2-9, (a) percent of leading institutions, plus (b) mean total units required: Fashion product knowledge = 118.5, Fashion business processes = 111.5, Economics = 106, Advanced math = 104, Marketing = 103.5, Field/work experience = 103, Accounting = 93.5, Psychology = 93.5, Speech communication = 93.5, Sociology = 93, Chemistry = 85, Computer science = 82.5, Consumer science = 52.

[16]The evolving rhetorical ideal suggested a close association between consumer science and fashion merchandising, but this was not in large measure substantiated by the data. Consumer science, however, was the most frequently cited area of integrative coursework required. Since many home economics units choose not to be AHEA accredited, traditional integrative subject areas may be no longer important to some institutions.

[17]It should be of concern that there is currently no accreditation standard for clothing and textiles or fashion merchandising programs. The closest is the American Home Economics Association (AHEA).

[18]There are hundreds of similarly oriented two-year colleges, other post secondary and secondary programs that feed into the four-year programs with fashion merchandising emphases.

[19]An evolving list of topical competencies prepared by representatives of ITAA's Four Year Institutions Committee has been circulated (Kunz, 1991). However, this work lacked a larger curricular context in which to be placed with specific reference to the "merchandising" strands which encumber the most recent frequently enrolled program areas. Moreover, this work has lacked reference to a chronological framework and has not incorporated basic principles of curriculum design (see for example, Dressel, 1968). The systematic tabular constructs conceived from data analyzed in the present study provide a defensible framework that could assist in the further development of apparel and textiles, consumer science, and retailing programs in any of the associated areas, including business management and marketing.

[20]An unfortunate state of professional interface was echoed by at least one pessimistic "gatekeeper" who argued that, "under the current budget crunch, with the threat of consolidation of similar programs, and the elimination of academically weak programs, collaboration between departments or similar programs is rarely occuring." (Comments quoted from a manuscript blind review document, January 1992.)

[21]See Burton & Bowers, 1980; Scott, Walsh, & Stampfl, 1984; Stampfl, 1982, 1983, to review precedents for such efforts.

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Table 1. Incorporated administrative unit titles, degree titles, and titles of specializations in the programs audited.

Degree title (Specialization)	Incorporated administrative unit title[a] (n=10)			
	C/F/ H R	H E	HuEc	Lib Arts
B.S. Clothing & Textiles (Apparel & Textile Marketing)			X	
B.S. Consumer & Family Studies (Retail Management)	X			
B.S. Environmental Textiles & Design (Retailing)	X			
B.A. Fashion (Fashion Merchandising)				X
B.S. Home Economics (Apparel Merchandising & Marketing, Fashion Merchandising)		XX		
B.S. Human Ecology (Apparel-Textile Management)			X	
B.S. Human Resources & Family Studies (Marketing of Textiles & Apparel)	X			
B.S. Retail Merchandising (Retail Merchandising)		X[b]		
B.S. Textiles (Textile Marketing/ Fashion Merchandising)			X	

[a] C/F/H R = Consumer/Family/Human Resources
H E = Home Economics
HuEc = Human Ecology
LibArts = Liberal Arts

[b] Incorporated administrative unit title changed to Human Ecology, effective 1990-91.

Table 2. General education.[a]

Course content required	(n=10) Institutions audited	Units required/ Range	Mean units required* Lower / division	Upper / division	Totals
Behavioral and social sciences					(12.5)
Economics	100%	3 - 8	5	1	6
Political sci	20%	1.5 - 3.5	<.5	<.5	<.5
Psychology	90%	3 - 8	3	<.5	3.5
Sociology	90%	3 - 3.5	3	-	3
Elective	0%	-	-	-	0
Culture and humanities					(17)
Comm/Speech	90%	3 - 9	3.5	-	3.5
English comp	90%	3 - 6	3.5	1	4.5
English lit	30%	3	1	-	1
Fine art	70%	2 - 9	3	-	3
History	40%	1.5 - 6	1	-	1
Elective	60%	3 - 12	3.5	.5	4
Life, natural, and physical sciences					(8)
Biology	30%	3 - 6	1.5	.5	2
Chemistry	80%	3 - 8	5	-	5
Natural sci	10%	3	<.5	-	<.5
Elective w/lab	10%	6	.5	-	.5
Mathematics					(7)
Alg/Calc/Trig	100%	3 - 9	4	-	4
Statistics	70%	3 - 6	1.5	1	2.5
Elect/Gen math	20%	3	.5	-	.5
Technology					(2.5)
Computer sci	80%	3 - 4	2	.5	2.5
Electives and other miscellaneous requirements[b]					(4)
Frosh studies	10%	3	<.5	-	<.5
Liberal arts	30%	9 - 24	3	.5	3.5
Physical ed	10%	1	<.5	-	<.5
Totals	100%	48 - 62	46	5	51

*Note: Figures based on relative portions of a composite (n=10) bachelor's degree requiring a minimum of 120-132 ($\bar{x}$=124) semester units or equivalent quarter units.

[a]AKA basic disciplines, general studies, liberal education/studies, university studies.

[b]Chosen from the general areas listed and others.

Table 3. Business administration.[a]

Course content required	(n=10) Institutions audited	Units required/ Range	Mean units required* Lower division	Upper division	Totals
Accounting	90%+	3 - 6	3	.5	3.5
Adver/Promo	40%+++	3	-	1	1
Business, Gen	10%	3	<.5	-	<.5
Business writing	30%	3	<.5	.5	1
Consumer behavior	20%+	3	-	.5	.5
Finance	20%	3	<.5	<.5	.5
Management	60%++	3 - 9	.5	2	2.5
Marketing	100%++++	3 - 9	.5	3	3.5
Personnel	20%	3	-	.5	.5
Public relations	10%+	3	-	<.5	<.5
Retailing	40%+	3	-	1	1
Electives[b]	50%	6 - 12	1	3.5	4.5
Totals	100%	11 - 36	6	14	20

*Note: Figures based on relative portions of a composite (n=10) bachelor's degree requiring a minimum of 120-132 ($\bar{x}$=124) semester units or equivalent quarter units.

[a]Focus on basic and advanced generic business principles in the content areas listed.

[b]Chosen from the areas listed or others in business administration, including organizational behavior, organizational policy, sales management.

+Some required content areas do not show maximum units because electives are chosen from multiple designated areas. The designated alternatives are identified with a sign (+) for each leading institution so indicating that additional units may accrue as chosen from those areas. These units are tabulated with the electives (Table 9).

Table 4. Interdisciplinary concentrations ranked most popular with fashion merchandising.

Concentrations	Weighted points[a] 1st ranked = 5, 2nd ranked = 4, etc.	Rank
Marketing[b]	(22)	1
Advertising	(18)	2
Management	(15)	3
Consumer behavior	(8)	4
Personnel administration	(5)	5
Communication Finance Public relations	(4)	6
Industrial relations Organizational behavior Psychology	(3)	7
Economics Industrial engineering	(2)	8
Accounting Chemistry/Material science Sales	(1)	9

[a]Respondents ranked the 5 most popular: 1,2,3,4,5.

[b]Includes international marketing and market research.

Table 5. Fashion product knowledge.

Course content required	(n=10) Institutions audited	Units required/ Range	Mean units required* Lower / division	Upper / division	Totals
Apparel					
Construction[a]	10%	3	<.5	-	<.5
Behavior[b]	20%+	2 - 3	<.5	<.5	.5
Culture[c]	70%+++	3 - 4	.5	1.5	2
Design[d]	30%+	3	1	-	1
Production[e]	20%	3	<.5	<.5	.5
Quality[f]	40%++	2 - 3	-	1	1
Selection[g]	10%	2	<.5	-	<.5
Textiles					
Basic/Advan[h]	100%+	3 - 7	3	2.5	5.5
Econ/Envir[i]	40%	3 - 6	-	1.5	1.5
Generic					
Current topics[j]	40%	3	.5	1	1.5
Design[k]	20%++	2 - 3	.5	-	.5
Electives[l]	100%	0 - 16+	1 - 2	2 - 5	3.5 - 4.5
Totals	100%	6 - 27	8 - 8.5	10.5	18.5 - 19

*Note: Figures based on relative portions of a composite (n=10) bachelor's degree requiring a minimum of 120-132 ($\bar{X}$=124) semester units or equivalent quarter units.

[a]Custom and home sewing applications for personal use.
[b]Social and psychological theories.
[c]Cultural, historical, and philosophical influences, women's roles.
[d]Visual design, design for marketing.
[e]Processes used by designers and the industry, custom crafted and ready to wear.
[f]Consumer value in ready to wear; craftsmanship, fabrication, labeling, safety, sizing.
[g]Aesthetics, economic factors, professional image.
[h]Scientific principles related to consumer choice, comfort, maintenance, and performance.
[i]Economic and environmental factors, may also include apparel.
[j]Ecological theory, issues, legislation, technology, trends.
[k]Artistic and creative.
[l]Chosen from the areas listed plus accessories (non-textile), home furnishings and home products, historical and interior textiles, illustration, material culture, and others with a product knowledge focus; see also electives and options (Table 9).

[+]Some required content areas do not show maximum units because electives are chosen from multiple designated areas. The designated alternatives are identified with a sign (+) for each leading institution so indicating that additional units may accrue as chosen from those areas. These units were tabulated with the electives (Table 9).

Table 6. Fashion business processes taught in fashion oriented departments.[a]

Course content required	(n=10) Institutions audited	Units required/ Range	Mean units required* Lower /division	Upper /division	Totals
Adver/Promo[b]	40%	3	-	1	1
Buying/Selling[c]	20%	3 - 6	<.5	.5	1
Industry[d]	30%	2 - 3	.5	<.5	1
Management[e]	20%	2 - 3	-	.5	.5
Marketing[f]	30%	3	<.5	.5	1
Merchandising[g]	80%	2 - 7	.5	2.5	3
Computerized	20%	3	-	.5	.5
Visual	20%	3	-	.5	.5
Retailing[h]	50%	3 - 6	<.5	2	2.5
Computerized	20%	3	-	.5	.5
Leadership	10%	3	-	<.5	<.5
Mgt/Super	10%	2	-	<.5	<.5
Electives[i]					
Totals	100%	0 - 30	2	9 - 5	11.5 - 12

*Note: Figures based on relative portions of a composite (n=10) bachelor's degree requiring a minimum of 120-132 ($\bar{X}$=124) semester units or equivalent quarter units.

[a]Specialized focus on the interplay between consumers, fashion industries, and merchandising functions; emphasis given to the objectives and viewpoints of both the consumer and the seller.

[b]Fashion communication (oral, written, visual), display, special events.

[c]Negotiating strategies.

[d]Overview of the fashion industry from concept to consumer, domestic and international.

[e]Facilities, inventory, store operations.

[f]Strategies for marketing fashion goods; production, pricing, distribution, and promotion; the fashion consumer.

[g]Merchandising principles and procedures for fashion products and services in the retail setting, buying and selling techniques related to consumer needs; case studies, guest lectures.

[h]Analytical and quantitative emphasis on retailing productivity for fashion merchandise, selection, controls, sales analysis, model stocks, buying plans, problem solving.

[i]Chosen from the areas listed plus others including entrepreneurship, global merchandising, retail in the ethical and social milieu, merchandising research. Choices vary according to options (Table 9).

Table 7. Career development, field and work experience.

Course content required	(n=10) Institutions audited	Units required/ Range	Mean units required* Lower division	Upper division	Totals
Career develop[a]	50%	1 - 4	<.5	.5	1
Field trip[b]	20%	1	-	<.5	<.5
Req exper[c]	50%	1 - 3.5+	-	1	1
Elect exper[d]	50%	3 - 15+	-	(6.5)	(6.5)
Cooperative ed[e]	10%	9 - 12	-	1	1
Exchange[f]	10%	sem/yr	-	Elect	
National tour[g]	50%	.75 - 1 yr	-	Elect	
Internatl tour[h]	40%	2 - 3	-	Elect	
Electives[i]	100%	vary			(vary)
Totals	100%	1 - 15	<.5	2.5 - 3	3

*Note: Figures based on relative portions of a composite (n=10) bachelor's degree requiring a minimum of 120-132 ($\bar{X}$=124) semester units or equivalent quarter units.

[a]Fashion industry and retail occupational searches, portfolio and resume development, interview practice, women in organizations, ethics.

[b]Visits to apparel and textiles industries in the community surrounding the university; showrooms, museums, theatres, garment districts.

[c]Required field/work experience including internships with related papers, projects, and seminars.

[d]Elective and/or selective competitive field/work experience in apparel showrooms, designers' studios, executive training, manufacturing, wholesale, international settings, retail management, and others.

[e]Formal, paid work experience with a highly structured academic counterpart. Differing from field experience and internship, it is a "more intensive" partnership between employer, school, and student.

[f]Visiting student at Fashion Institute of Technology (NYC), Philadelphia School of Textile and Science (PA), Study Abroad (American College in London), and others.

[g]Apparel and textile industries in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, New York, North Carolina, St. Louis, San Francisco.

[h]Asian and European experiential and research tours.

[i]Chosen from the areas listed above. Units vary according to options chosen (Table 9).

Table 8. Integrative subjects.[a]

Course content required	(n=10) Institutions audited	Units required/ Range	Mean units required* Lower / division	Upper / division	Totals
Child/Human dev	20%	3 - 6	1	-	1
Consumer sci[b]	50%	3 - 6	<.5	1.5	2
Family relations	10%	5	-	.5	.5
Foods/Nutrition	10%	3	-	<.5	<.5
Home econ ed	10%	4	<.5	<.5	<.5
Electives[c]	50%	6 - 15	3	.5	3.5
Totals	100%	0 - 15	4	3	7[d]

*Note: Figures based on relative portions of a composite (n=10) bachelor's degree requiring a minimum of 120-132 ($\bar{X}$=124) semester units or equivalent quarter units.

[a]Cross (inter)departmental courses offered within the incorporated administrative units, i.e. consumer/family/human resources, home economics, human ecology, business/fashion.

[b]Consumer science includes consumer behavior, consumer in the market, resource management, personal finance, home management, and others.

[c]Chosen from the areas listed or others including home economics journalism and courses from an array of disciplines associated with human ecology, i.e., community, economics, family, health, nutrition, and workplace.

[d]Eight of 10 respondents reporting. Two respondents claimed only "textiles" as integrative units and these were reported in Table 5.

Table 9. Options and electives.

Course content required	(n=10) Institutions audited	Units required/ Range	Mean units required* Lower division	Upper division	Totals
Apparel[a]/ Home furnishings	10%	17 - 18	-	(17 - 18)	-
Business/ Fashion[b]	10%	12	-	1	1
Field/Internship/ Practicum[c]	30%	5 - 24	-	3.5	3.5
Directed electives[d]	20%	18 - 30		4 - 5.5	4 - 5.5
Free electives[e]	60%	0 - 13	-	3.5 - 5	3.5 - 5
Totals	100%	0 - 30		12 - 15	12 - 15

*Note: Figures based on relative portions of a composite (n=10) bachelor's degree requiring a minimum of 120-132 ($\bar{X}$=124) semester units or equivalent quarter units.

[a]Apparel option was the audit subject, content designated or chosen from fashion product knowledge (see Table 5).

[b]Chosen from any combination of business or fashion oriented courses.

[c]Field experience, internship, or practicum and/or relevant courses designated and/or chosen from over 40 courses in the areas of store management, fashion industries, merchandise lines, personnel, advertising, promotion, and consumer science.

[d]Chosen from over 4,500 campus wide courses associated with human ecology; chosen from computer merchandising, marketing, retail management, organizational behavior, finance, market research, sales management, personnel management, and others.

[e]Unrestricted choice of cross-campus, incorporated or intradepartmental courses including field or work experience, independent study, liberal arts, and others.

INCORPORATED DEPARTMENTAL AREAS

* Departments included in the present study.

APPAREL & TEXTILES

Apparel Design
Behavioral Studies in Dress
Clothing & Textile Extension
Clothing & Textile Journalism
Clothing & Textiles*
Fashion Design
Textile Marketing*
Textile Science
Textiles & Apparel*
Textiles & Clothing

CHILD & FAMILY

Child & Family Development
Child & Family Studies
Child Development & Family Studies
Family Relations & Human Development
Family Social Science
Human Development & Family Studies (3)

CONSUMER

Consumer Economics
Consumer Science
Family & Consumer Economics
Family Economics Management
Family Resource Management

FOODS & NUTRITION

Dietetics, Restaurant, & Institutional Management
Food Science & Nutrition
Food Science & Nutritional Sciences
Food, Nutrition, & Institutional Administration
Food & Nutrition (3)
Human Nutrition & Food Management
Human Nutrition, Foods, & Food Systems Management
Nutritional Sciences
Restaurant, Hotel, & Institutional Management

HOME ECONOMICS

General Home Economics
Communications
Continuing & Vocational Education
Education (2)
Extension (2)
Interdepartmental Studies
Journalism
Vocational Education (2)

HOUSING & INTERIORS

Housing & Interior Design

CONTEMPORARY MERGED

Clothing, Textiles, & Interior Design*
Consumer Economics & Housing
Consumer Sciences & Retailing*
Design & Environmental Analysis
Design, Housing, & Apparel*
Environment, Textiles, & Design*
Textiles & Consumer Economics*
Textiles, Apparel, & Interior Design*

INNOVATIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY

Business/Fashion*
Biology & Society
Family & Community Development
Human Ecology
Human Services Studies
Individual Curriculum
Informational Services
Policy Analysis
Social Work

Figure 1. Titles of departments and divisions associated with fashion merchandising.

INTRADEPARTMENTAL SPECIALIZATIONS

* Specializations featured in the present study.

APPAREL & TEXTILES

Apparel
Apparel Design (4)
Apparel Technology
Clothing
Costume Design
Fashion Design
Historical Studies in Dress
Textile Science (3)
Textiles (3)
Textiles & Apparel
Textiles & Apparel Economics
Textiles & Clothing

CONSUMER SCIENCE

Consumer Affairs
Consumer Financial Advising

HOUSING, EQUIPMENT, INTERIOR DESIGN

Housing
Housing & Equipment
Interior Design (5)
Interior Furnishings

BUSINESS PROCESS (Product Oriented)

Apparel & Textile Marketing*
Apparel Merchandising & Marketing*
Apparel-Textile Management*
Fashion Merchandising* (2)
Marketing of Textiles & Apparel*
Textile Marketing/Fashion Merchandising*

BUSINESS PROCESS (Generic)

Marketing Education
Retail Management*
Retail Merchandising*
Retailing*

OTHER

Advanced Studies
Applied Design & Visual Communication
Business Options
Commercial Design
Related Art
Theater Design

Figure 2. Titles of intradepartmental specializations associated with fashion merchandising.

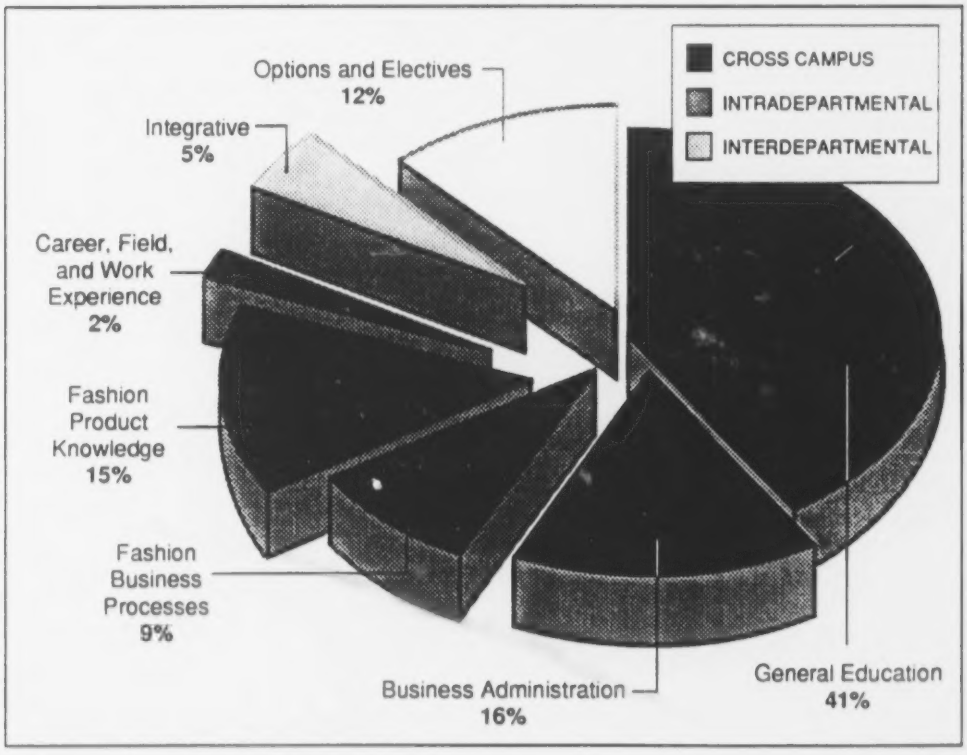

Figure 3. Undergraduate fashion merchandising curriculum.

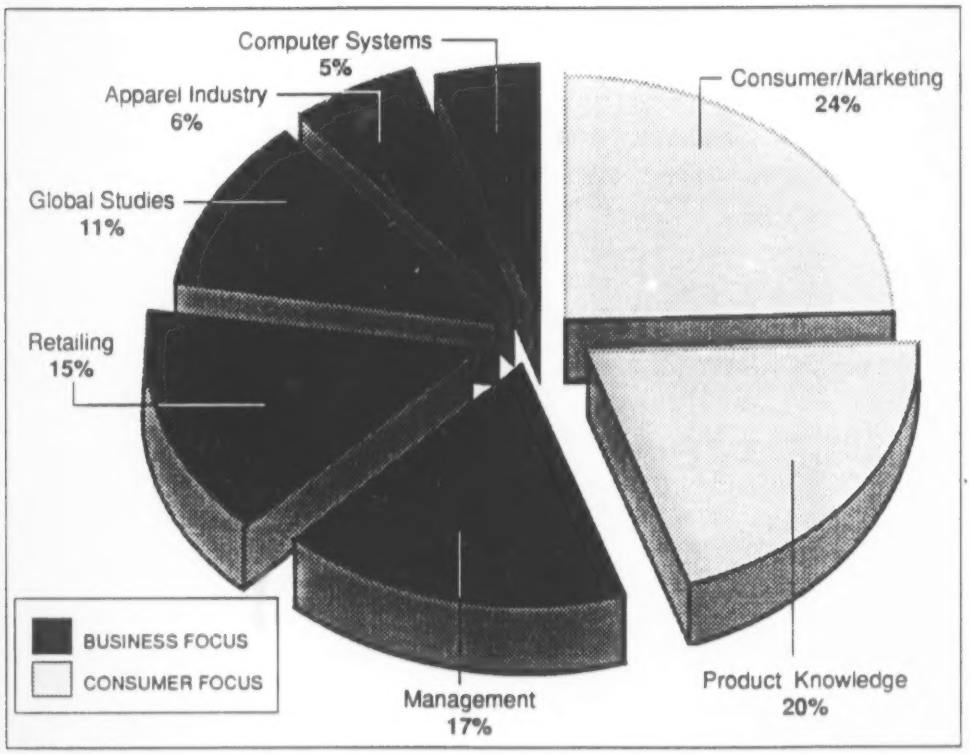

Figure 4. Fashion merchandising faculty research.